

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMCONSUL BELIZE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR, BH, GT, MX

SUBJ: BELIZE-GUATEMALA DISPUTE: MEXICO POSITION CONTINUES MURKY

REF: MEXICO 9158

1. QUESTIONED BY REPORTERS ON OCTOBER 20 FOLLOWING A MEETING WITH PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA, FONSEC RABASA SAID, "THAT PRESIDENT ECHEVERRIA SAID IN, THE SENSE THAT HE RECOGNIZED OR RESPECTED THE HISTORIC RIGHTS OF GUATEMALA OVER BELIZE, DOES NOT EXCLUDE OR CONTRADICT IN ANY WAY THE MAINTENANCE AND CONTINUING VALIDITY AND FORCE OF THE RIGHTS OF MEXICO DERIVED FROM THE TREATY OR TREATIES WHICH HAVE BEEN CELEBRATED ON THE SUBJECT." RABASA ALSO SAID, "YOU KNOW THAT THERE HAS BEEN MUCH DISCUSSION OVER (MEXICO'S RIGHTS IN BELIZE). THERE ARE VERY DISTINGUISHED AUTHORS SUCH AS THE ILLUSTRIOUS INTERNATIONALIST FABELA WHO SUSTAINED THAT WHAT IS TODAY BELIZE AS FAR AS THE RIVER MARSUN WAS A DEPENDENCY OF THE CAPAINCY GENERAL OF THE YUCATAN." HE NOTED THAT THE DISPUTE MIGHT BE VENTILATED IN THE UN OR MIGHT BE CARRIED TO THE INTERNATIONAL COURT OF JUSTICE.

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"WHAT WE HOPE FOR IS A FRIENDLY AND PACIFIC ARRANGEMENT."

2. CESAR SEPULVEDA (MEXICAN AUTHORITY ON INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, PROFESSOR,-DIRECTOR OF GOM FOREIGN SERVICE SCHOOL), IN AN OCTOBER 21 COLUMN IN INFLUENTIAL EXCELSIOR, NOTES THE REACTION CAUSED BY ECHEVERRIA'S RECENT DECLARATION ON BELIZE. ADMITTING THAT THE STATEMENT MAY HAVE BEEN A LITTLE AMBIGUOUS, SEPULVEDA INSISTS THAT IT IMPLIES NO DEROGATION OF MEXICAN RIGHTS OR ABAONDONMENT OF MEXICO'S TERRITORIAL PATRIMONY. SEPULVEDA'S REASONING IS RATHER TORTUOUS; IN THE END HE SIMPLY EXHORTS READERS TO BELIEVE THAT THE PRESIDENT IS CONSCIOUS OF THE NEED TO PROTECT NATIONAL INTERESTS.

3. COMMENT: THIS LOOKS LIKE WHERE WE CAME IN. BOTH RABASA'S AND SEPULVEDA'S COMMENTS (POSSIBLY IN RESPONSE TO THE GARCIA CANTU ARTICLE REPORTED IN REFTTEL) NEITHER FOLLOW NOR ARE WHOLLY COMPATIBLE WITH ECHEVERRIA'S UNADORNED STATEMENT THAT MEXICO WAS "RESPECTFUL OF GUATEMALA'S HISTORIC RIGHTS" IN BELIZE. IT MUST BE ASSUMED THAT RABASA HAD ECHEVERRIA'S WARRANT FOR MAKING THE CITED "CLARIFICATION". NONETHELESS, AND PARTICULARLY SHOULD THE BELIZE-GUATEMALA ISSUE FLARE UP IN A CRISIS CONTEXT, WE MUST ALSO ASSUME THAT MEXICO'S POSITION WOULD BE DETERMINED BY ECHEVERRIA AND NOT BY THE FOREIGN SECRETARIAT. WHAT THAT POSITION MIGHT BE REMAINS UNCERTAIN DESPITE RABASA'S STATEMENT.
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